Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have proposals to develop teaching and learning material for disabled children;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the availability of such material at present and participation of NGOs in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) to (c) Teaching and learning material at low cost have already been developed by the National Institutes in their respective area of disability. Non-Governmental Organisations are also involved in the production and distribution of the material. This is a continuing process. Various national and State level organisations displayed their existing material at an exhibition jointly organized by Rehabilitation Council of India and NCERT on 24th and 25th March, 2000 at New Delhi.

Declaring Jain Sect as a Minority

†2545. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the reasons for not declaring Jain Sect as a minority even through it is a totally independent and separate religion like Islam, Christianity and Hindu religion;

(b) whether it is appropriate to pave the way for welfare activities to serve the interests of other minorities by ignoring the followers of Jain religion who are original natives of India; and

(c) if not, by when the Jain Sect will be declared as minority on the basis of their number ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) to (c) The Question as to who constitutes a minority is [illegible] under a Writ Petition in the Hon'ble Supreme Court. The final decision in the matter of recognition of Jain Sect as minority will depend on the decision of the Supreme Court.

†Starred notice of the question was received on 07.04.2000